The Special Report

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF VISITORS

OF THE

County Lunatic Asylum,

AT

COLNEY HATCH,

TO HER MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

FOR THE

COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX,

In General Session Assembled.

LONDON:
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1858.

Middlesex.

TO HER MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE FOR THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX,

IN GENERAL SESSION ASSEMBLED.

The Special Report of the Committee of Visitors of the County Lunatic Asylum at Colney Hatch.

The new buildings at this Asylum being now rapidly approaching to completion, your Committee found it necessary to ascertain as nearly as circumstances would allow, what further sum of money would be required to provide for additional works not comprised in the original grant from the Court. They accordingly gave notice on the last County Day, that application would be made on the 2nd. of December, for a grant of £10,000. to carry these objects into execution. They think it will be the proper course now, to enable the Justices to judge of the propriety of the charges likely to be incurred, and of the necessity of doing certain works prior to increasing the number of patients on the 1st of January, to lay before the Court the following details.

Your Committee would premise that none of these works were comprised in the original estimate, most, if not all of them, being of such a character, that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to form a correct idea of their probable cost. The Court were informed at an early period, that negotiations were long pending between the Commissioners in Lunacy and your Committee, as to the original plans, and that it was absolutely necessary to give way in various particulars, as the Commissioners intimated in plain terms, that if the suggestions of their architect were not acceded to, they should recommend the Secretary of State to refuse his sanction to the plans altogether. The Court is aware

that the Commissioners in Lunacy did not disguise their unwillingness to allow the enlargement of the Asylum to be made at all, believing it would have been better to build a third Asylum. Your Committee on the contrary, were of opinion, and the Court acquiesced in their view, that on the ground of expense, as well as on many other considerations, it would be better to add to the two existing Asylums. The result of the negotiations was, that the plan as it came back from the Commissioners in Lunacy, had assumed a very different shape in some respects, and the contract price, instead of being £47,000, as Mr. Cubitt at first estimated, turned out to be £67,000. Nor can your Committee entertain any doubt, now that the works are nearly completed, that the contract has been other than favourable to the County.

It must also not be forgotten, that the original plan contemplated an addition for 671 patients, while the present one provides for 800. Considering the pressing demands for accommodation of patients now unprovided for in the Asylums of the County, your Committee can have no doubt that they will have immediate application for at least this number, if not more.

The difference between the original estimated cost as compared with the number of patients to be admitted, and the contract price as compared with the additional number of patients, thus becomes about £10 per patient. Your Committee trust, however, that the Court will believe that every effort has been made on their part not to expend one shilling which they do not consider absolutely necessary; many suggestions, indeed, have been made, involving considerable expense, especially in the very costly item of Airing Courts, to which they have not acceded. They believe that, when completed, the building will be found as well adapted to the purposes for which the County has so liberally contributed—that of providing an asylum and an hospital, a place of recreation, of occupation, and of cure, to many demented and helpless individuals, for whose well-being these costly appliances are absolutely required.

Among the following items of expense which your Committee are now enabled to lay before the Court in a more accurate shape, some have been so strongly and

so repeatedly urged by the Commissioners in Lunacy that it is thought better to provide them at once. One of these is, that there should be extended walks made to the farthest parts of the grounds, to enable the patients to vary their exercise as much as possible within the precincts of the Asylum. The cost of this is estimated at upwards of £1,000. The necessity of increasing the gas works, to meet the wants of what may now be called a small town, is another item involving a heavy expenditure. Great complaints were made of the offensive smells emitted from the old gas works which are now immediately opposite the railway station. Independently of this it would have been necessary to remove them to a fresh site, and your Committee hoped that the Great Northern Railway Company would have given them facilities for conveying coals and other requirements of the gas works directly from their siding. In this they have been disappointed, and a large additional expense will therefore be incurred in making a tramway from the present entrance to the new buildings, the whole estimated cost of which, with coal staiths &c. is £1,790. It was impossible to calculate at an earlier period what would be the amount required for restoring some airing courts which have been used by the workmen during the alterations, and for making new courts. The number of these latter has been kept as low as was possible consistently with the accommodation of so many new patients; and, in the opinion of one of the Medical Superintendents, what is now proposed is hardly adequate. This is a very large item of expenditure, estimated at £2,120. The cost of providing temporary laundries when the others were pulled down, which could not be computed at the outset, is also considerable, viz. £519. Additional farm buildings are of course necessary, and the estimated expense, £900 does not appear extravagant. Several smaller works, which were not at first taken into account, will be found in the statement appended, swelling the whole sum required to £10,135 7s. 1d.

C. H. COTTRELL,
CHAIRMAN.

Colney Hatch Asylum,
Nov. 17, 1858.

APPENDIX.

A Statement of Works required for the entire completion of the Asylum at Colney Hatch, not provided for in any grant of money heretofore made by the Court, and towards the cost of which a motion for the grant of £10,000 will be made on the County day of the present Session.

	£.	s.	d.
1. Temporary Laundry required for carrying on the work of the Asylum, during the pulling down of the existing buildings, to prepare the site for new buildings:—Wages and Materials.....	519	7	1
2. New Carpenters' Shops	299	13	0
3. New Shed for preparing vegetables for cooking, with Tanks and Fittings	80	0	0
4. New Fire Engine Shed	50	0	0
[Carried forward]	949	0	1

[N.B. The sites on which the former erections stood being required for other purposes, in consequence of the alterations in the plans, the former buildings were pulled down, and others erected elsewhere, the Laundries as temporary, the others as permanent buildings.]

	£.	s.	d.
[Brought forward]	949	0	1
5. Ice House	40	0	0
6. Improvement and Enlargement of the present Workshops.....	200	0	0
7. Alteration and Improvement of the present Female Workrooms, and Erection of rooms there for Laundry Servants.....	220	0	0
8. Siding from the Great Northern Railway, with Line of Railway to the Gas Works and Coal Stores, with Coal Staiths	1,790	0	0
9. Formation of New Roads and Airing Courts, reinstatement of present roads and Airing Courts, and paving of Yards :—			
Roads 1,192 14 0			
Yards 706 19 0			
Airing Courts..... 2,120 1 0			
	4,019	14	0
10. Formation of Laundry Drying Ground	266	13	0
11. Lowering present level of do.	250	0	0
12. Enlargement of Farm Buildings...	900	0	0
13. Law, and sundry charges	500	0	0
14. Extended Walks round the Grounds, as recommended by the Commissioners in Lunacy	1,000	0	0
	£10,135	7	1